
4.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS ASSUMPTIONS GENERALLY USED TO EVALUATE THE IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT

BASELINE ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS ASSUMED IN THE DRAFT EIR

Section 15125(a) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines requires that an EIR include a description of the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project, as they exist at the time the Notice of Preparation (NOP) is published. The CEQA Guidelines also specify that this description of the physical environmental conditions is to serve as the baseline physical conditions by which a lead agency determines whether impacts of a project are considered significant.

The environmental setting conditions of the project site and the surrounding area are described in the technical sections of the Draft EIR (Sections 4.1 through 4.12). In general, these discussions describe the setting conditions of the project site and the surrounding area as they existed when the NOP for the project (SCH No. 2015092012) was released on September 2, 2015.

APPROACH TO THE PROJECT-SPECIFIC ANALYSIS

Project Buildout Assumptions

Construction activities are anticipated to start in the summer of 2016 and would consist of the construction of the interior roadways, drainage and water quality facilities, and infrastructure extensions into the site. This would include tree removal and grading for these improvements. Construction of the residential units would also start in 2016. The timing of buildout of the project site would be based on market conditions. However, the Draft EIR conservatively assumes that the project is built out under existing (2015) conditions to match setting conditions that existed when the NOP was released. The impact analysis assumes full occupation of all the residential units, irrelevant of season variations in housing occupancy.

In addition, although not part of the proposed project, the analysis provided in this Draft EIR conservatively assumes that half of the single-family units (17) could in the future develop second units. Therefore, the total residential unit count for the project is conservatively assumed to be 80 units.

Impact Analysis Organization and Methodology

Existing Setting

This subsection includes a description of the physical setting conditions associated with the technical area of discussion, consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15125. As previously identified, the existing setting is generally based on conditions as they existed when the NOP for the project was released.

Regulatory Framework

This subsection identifies applicable federal, state, regional, and local plans, policies, laws, and regulations that apply to the technical area of discussion.

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Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The Draft EIR contain a description of current setting conditions, an evaluation of the project's potential direct and indirect environmental effects, identification of feasible mitigation measures, and, if applicable, identification of whether significant environmental effects of the proposed project would remain after application of proposed mitigation measures.

The Impacts and Mitigation Measures subsection identifies direct and indirect environmental effects associated with implementation of the proposed project and identifies measures, where feasible, to mitigate potentially significant environmental effects. Concluding statements are included in the impact discussion to verify the level of significance of the impact before and after mitigation. Standards of significance are identified and utilized to determine whether identified environmental effects are considered "significant" and require the application of mitigation measures. Each environmental impact analysis is identified numerically and is supported by substantial evidence included in the discussion.

CEQA requires that mitigation to lessen the environmental impact must be feasible. CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4(a) (1) states, "An EIR shall describe feasible measures which could minimize significant adverse impacts..." Feasible is defined as "capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, social, and technological factors" (CEQA Section 21061.1).

Mitigation measures for the proposed project were developed through a review of the environmental effects of the project by environmental professionals and consultants with specific technical expertise. Any feasible mitigation measures that could minimize significant adverse impacts are discussed, after which the impact discussion notes whether the impact would be mitigated to a less than significant level or if it would remain significant and unavoidable.

APPROACH TO THE CUMULATIVE IMPACT ANALYSIS

Definition of Cumulative Setting

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(a) requires that an EIR "discuss cumulative impacts of a project when the project's incremental effect is cumulatively considerable." CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b) states, "The discussion of cumulative impacts shall reflect the severity of the impacts and their likelihood of occurrence, but the discussion need not provide as great detail as is provided for the effects attributable to the project alone. The discussion should be guided by standards of practicality and reasonableness, and should focus on the cumulative impact to which the identified other projects contribute rather than the attributes of other projects which do not contribute to the cumulative impact."

For the proposed project, the cumulative setting conditions considered in this Draft EIR generally encompass eastern Placer County and, specifically, the Squaw Valley area. Therefore, the cumulative setting conditions consider the Placer County General Plan (adopted May 2013) as well as development projects that have been proposed and/or approved in the county and the region as appropriate. However, the cumulative setting varies for each environmental issue area, depending on the resources affected and any relevant boundaries, such as the Mountain Counties Air Basin for air quality resources. Each technical section of the Draft EIR includes a description of the geographic extent of the cumulative setting for that resource based on the characteristics of the environmental issue under consideration as set forth in Section 15130(b) of

the CEQA Guidelines. **Table 5.0-1** in Section 5.0, Other CEQA Considerations, provides a summary of large-scale projects in the region that are considered in the cumulative analysis.

Consideration of Cumulative Impacts

Each technical section in the Draft EIR considers whether the project's effect on anticipated cumulative setting conditions would be cumulatively considerable (i.e., a significant effect). The determination of whether the project's impact on cumulative conditions is considerable is based on applicable public agency standards, consultation with public agencies, and/or expert opinion. In addition, as described above, the environmental effects of potential development of the project are considered in the cumulative impact analysis.

EFFECTS NOT FOUND TO BE SIGNIFICANT

As discussed in the Notice of Preparation for the project, the following environmental issues would result in less than significant or no impacts and will not be discussed further in the Draft EIR for the reasons discussed below.

Agriculture and Forestry Resources

Agriculture Resources

According to the California Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP), there is no farmland in the eastern portion of Placer County. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not result in the conversion of any Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. Furthermore, the project site is not subject to a Williamson Act contract, and its current land use designation and zoning do not allow for any type of agricultural use. There would be no direct or indirect impact to agricultural resources.

Forestry Resources

Although the project site contains forestry resources (i.e., fir and pine trees), the site is not of sufficient size or in a suitable location to allow the management or harvesting of any forest resources. Furthermore, the site's current land use designation and zoning do not allow any type of forestry use. Additionally, the site is surrounded by single-family residential and commercial development and would not indirectly impact forestry resources. The project applicant would prepare a Timber Harvesting Plan and acquire a timberland conversion permit from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) prior to project implementation. Therefore, the project would have less than significant impacts on forestry resources.

Air Quality

Objectionable Odors

No major sources of odors were identified in the vicinity of the project site that could potentially affect project residents. In addition, the project would not include any uses identified by the Placer County Air Quality Management District as having the potential to cause significant odor impacts. The project would have no impact related to objectionable odors.

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Biological Resources

Habitat Conservation and Natural Community Conservation Plans

There are no adopted habitat conservation plans or natural community conservation plans which affect the project site. Therefore, there would be no impact related to any such plans.

Geology and Soils

Septic Systems

The proposed residential units would be connected to the public sewer system. Therefore, no septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems would be installed as part of the proposed project.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Hazardous Materials

Project construction and occupancy would involve the routine transport, use, storage, and disposal of limited quantities of common hazardous materials within one-quarter mile of Squaw Valley Academy. However, the transport and use hazardous materials are strictly regulated by federal and state agencies to minimize adverse hazards from accidental release. These regulations include the Hazardous Materials Transport Act (Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 49) enforced by the US Department of Transportation; the federal Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA), and the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act enforced by the US Environmental Protection Agency; and the Occupational Safety and Health Act and CFR 29 enforced by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA); as well as provisions of the California Code of Regulations enforced by the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), the California Occupational Safety and Health Act (CCR Title 8) enforced by the California Department of Industrial Relations; the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Act and the Underground Storage Tank Law enforced by the State Water Resources Control Board and the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board; the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act enforced by the California Health and Welfare Agency; and the Hazardous Materials Release Response Plans/Inventory Law enforced by the California Office of Emergency Services.

Furthermore, as a residential development, the project would not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or wastes at volumes or in a manner which could create a substantial risk to local area schools. Furthermore, the project site is not included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 (Cortese List).

Airport Hazards

There are no airports within 2 miles of the project site. Truckee Tahoe Airport, approximately 5 miles to the northeast, is the nearest airport to the site. At such a distance, the project would not create any safety hazards to project residents related to airport operation.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Flooding and Accidental Inundation

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) (Flood Map Panel 06061C0329H, effective 8/25/15), the area of the project site proposed for development is located outside the 100-year flood hazard area. A small portion of the western parcel (APN 096-230-055) adjacent to the Squaw Creek corridor is designated as Zone AE, indicating that it is subject to inundation by the 100-year flood event. However, no improvements are proposed within this area. Therefore, the project would not place any housing or other structure within a 100-year flood hazard area. Furthermore, the project site is not located within the inundation areas for any dams, watercourses controlled by a levee, or water bodies capable of creating seiche or tsunami waves.

Mineral Resources

The project site is not used for mineral extraction, nor is it designated as an important mineral recovery site. Therefore, there would not be a significant impact on mineral resources.

Noise

Airport Noise

The airport nearest the project site is Truckee Tahoe Airport approximately 5 miles to the northeast. At such a distance, project residents would not be exposed to noise associated with airport or aircraft operations that would exceed applicable standards. There would be no impact.

Transportation and Traffic

Air Traffic Patterns

The airport nearest the project site is Truckee Tahoe Airport, approximately 5 miles to the northeast. At such a distance, the project would not be expected to have any effect on air traffic patterns and would not result in any safety risks related to aircraft operations. There would be no impact.

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